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## REPORTS OF BUREAUS OF STATISTICS OF LABOR.

PUBLISHED IN 1887.

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NATIONAL.—*Third Annual Report of Commissioner of Labor for 1887. Strikes and Lockouts.* Carroll D. Wright, Commissioner. Washington, 1888, pp. 1172.

CALIFORNIA.—*Third Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the State of California, for the years 1887-88.* John J. Tobin, Commissioner. Sacramento, pp. 378.

CONNECTICUT.—*Third Annual Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics for the State of Connecticut, for the year ending November 30, 1887.* Samuel T. Hotchkiss, Commissioner. Hartford, pp. 494.

IOWA.—*Second Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics for the State of Iowa.* 1886-87. E. R. Hutchins, Commissioner, Des Moines, pp. 416.

KANSAS.—*Third Annual Report of Bureau of Labor and Industrial Statistics of Kansas.* Frank H. Betton, Commissioner. Topeka, pp. 327.

MAINE.—*First Annual Report of Bureau of Industrial and Labor Statistics for the State of Maine.* 1887. S. W. Matthews, Commissioner. Augusta, pp. 239.

MASSACHUSETTS.—*Eighteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Statistics of Labor, December, 1887.* Carroll D. Wright, Commissioner. Boston, pp. 294.

MICHIGAN.—*Fifth Annual Report of Bureau of Labor and Industrial Statistics for 1887.* A. H. Heath, Commissioner. Lansing, pp. 432.

MISSOURI.—*Ninth Annual Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the State of Missouri, for the year ending November 5, 1887.* O. Kochtitzky, Commissioner. Jefferson City, pp. 293.

NEW JERSEY.—*Tenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Statistics of Labor and Industries, October 31, 1887.* James Bishop, Chief. Trenton, pp. 360.

NORTH CAROLINA.—*First Annual Report of Bureau of Labor Statistics of North Carolina, for the year 1887.* W. N. Jones, Commissioner. Raleigh, pp. 243.

NEW YORK.—*Fifth Annual Report of Bureau of Statistics of Labor of State of New York, for the year 1887.* Charles F. Peck, Commissioner. Troy, pp. 792.

OHIO.—*Eleventh Annual Report of Bureau of Statistics of Labor of Ohio.* 1887. Alonzo D. Fassett, Commissioner. Columbus, pp. 283.

PENNSYLVANIA.—*Annual Report of the Secretary of Internal Affairs of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.* Part III. *Industrial Statistics.* Vol. xv, 1887. Albert S. Bolles, Chief of Bureau. Harrisburg.

RHODE ISLAND.—*First Annual Report of the Commissioner of Industrial Statistics made to the General Assembly at its January Session, 1888.* Josiah B. Bowditch, Commissioner. Providence, pp. 101.

WISCONSIN.—*Third Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor and Industrial Statistics.* 1887-88. Frank A. Flower, Commissioner. Madison, pp. 366.

No country in the world presents a greater mass of material on the labor question, and the condition of the laboring classes, than does the United States. Unfortunately, this material is scattered through a great number of different reports, and is of varying degree of accuracy and reliability. Among these documents are the labor bureau reports enumerated at the head of this notice. Some of them are of great value, many of them are interesting, especially to the particular community concerned, although most of them betray the fact that the organization of the bureau is not yet efficient enough to do really good work, and the reports are, as a consequence, very much padded. It may be useful, however, to run through them and indicate briefly any points that seem to be of interest.

The report of the *National Bureau on Strikes and Lockouts* is of great value. The investigation covers the six years from 1881 to 1886. The result is as follows:

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RELATIVE NUMBER OF STRIKES BY YEARS.

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Year.	Strikes.	Establishments.	Average Establishments to a Strike.	Employes striking and involved.
1881	471	2,928	6.2	129,521
1882	454	2,105	4.6	154,671
1883	478	2,759	5.8	149,763
1884	443	2,367	5.3	147,054
1885	645	2,284	3.5	242,705
1886	1,411	9,861	7.0	499,489
	3,902	22,304	5.7	1,323,203

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Partial returns for 1887 indicated a decrease in the number of strikes during that year, so that the year 1886 seems to have been the climax of this kind of labor trouble. It may be remarked that the unit of measurement in this investigation was the "establishment" and not the strike. Some strikes extended to a large number of establishments, in some cases widely separated, and it was found impossible to classify them satisfactorily in that way. The real base figure is, therefore, the number of establishments, while the other figures are, more or less, estimates.

The report carries on the investigation in many different directions, which can only be briefly indicated here. Of all the strikes 82.24 per cent were ordered by the labor unions; and of the lockouts 79.18 per cent were ordered by combinations of employers. Of all the establishments involved in strikes 60.13 per cent were closed (temporarily), and of those involved in lockouts 63.23 per cent were closed. The duration of stoppage or the average days closed for the strikes was 23 days, and for lockouts 28.4 days. Of all the strikes 46.52 per cent were successful, 13.47 per cent were partially successful, and 39.95 per cent were failures. Of lockouts 25.47 per cent were successful, 8.58 per cent were partially successful, 60.48 per cent failed. But while 39.95 per cent only of the strikes were unsuccessful, they involved 49.91 per cent of the whole number of men striking, so that it may be said that in only one half of the cases do the strikers accomplish their object.

The causes given for the strikes are as follows: For increase of wages, 42.32 per cent; for reduction of hours, 19.48 per cent; against reduction of wages, 7.77 per cent; for increase of wages *and* reduction of hours, 7.59 per cent. Wages and hours of labor appear as the general cause. The loss to employees by strikes and lockouts is very difficult to calculate, but is summarized at \$51,972,440. The loss to employers is calculated for the six years at \$34,163,814. Both of these figures must be mere estimates. The principal industries affected by strikes were boots and shoes, brick-making, building trades, clothing, cooperage, food preparations, furniture, lumber, metals, mining, stone, tobacco, and transportation. In lockouts, five industries bore 79.54 per cent of the whole burden as follows: boots and shoes, building trades, clothing, metals and metallic goods, and tobacco.

In addition to the general tables the report contains a brief account of the strikes and lockouts occurring in the United States before 1881, and a summary of the decisions of courts and legislation concerning strikes, combinations, conspiracies, boycotts, etc.

In respect to this whole report it may be said that no claim can be made that these figures as to the number of strikes, the number of days they lasted, the loss to the laborers, etc., are absolutely exact. It is impossible to obtain exact figures, because they do not exist. These statements are those made by the experts sent by the bureau to the place where the strike occurred, and are the result of their inquiries. They are the best we can obtain, and there is every indication that the officers of the bureau discharged their duty with skill and care. The report is the most valuable mass of information yet brought together on this difficult and obscure subject.

The *California* report contains some interesting information as to the condition of the working women of California and the trade-unions of that State. The rest of the report consists of a chapter on manual and industrial training, and on building and loan associations, which may be of value to the people of California, but which adds nothing to our labor statistics.

The *Connecticut* report has absolutely no statistics. The commissioner came into office about the middle of the year,—too late to do anything,—and the report consists of a history of the industrial evolution of Connecticut and some letters from prominent men, giving their opinion of the labor question.

The *Iowa* report, on the other hand, is composed almost entirely of statistics of wages and the cost of living, arranged by localities. These statistics are not complete enough to be of any value. The returns were made by mail, and were entirely inadequate for the purpose.

The *Kansas* report has two very excellent features. One is an investigation, made by the commissioner in person, of the poor-houses of the State. There are no comparative statistics of any great value, but it seems probable that the amount of pauperism in Kansas is increasing. Noticeable is the large number of paupers of foreign birth, and the large number of persons supported by the State, who have been disabled while in the service of railroad companies. The second feature is a monthly return from a large number of working-men of their wages and expenses. While these are not sufficient to

form a comprehensive wage-statistics for the whole State, yet they give us valuable indications of the condition of the working classes and the variations in that condition from month to month and from year to year. The investigations of the Kansas commissioner have always been distinguished by great good sense and a comprehension of the kind of work possible with a limited appropriation. Reports on the State charities, flouring mills, manufacturing industries, coal operators, railroads, and strikes complete the volume.

The *Maine* bureau makes its first report, and, as is usual in such cases, the statistics are not of much value. The report is made up principally of a history of the establishment of labor bureaus in the United States, the proceedings of the convention of chiefs of labor bureaus held at Madison, Wisconsin, the views of working men as given in letters to the bureau, and a history of labor, with some information in regard to labor organizations and co-operation in Maine.

The *Massachusetts* bureau of labor statistics is accustomed to give us more valuable reports than any other State bureau, owing to its better organization, its long experience, the confidence and support of the people of the State and the skill of its officers. In fact, it is about the only State bureau whose statistical work is of a high order. For its report for 1887 it made use also of the machinery of the State census of 1885, so that we have a statistical investigation of great accuracy and exhaustiveness. It is devoted entirely to the "unemployed." At the census of 1885 each person who was engaged in a gainful occupation was desired to state if he had been unemployed at his principal occupation, and if so for how long a period; and also if he had had other occupation during that period, and if so for how long. The result is as follows:

"That out of a total of 816,470 persons employed in gainful occupations in this State, 241,589, or 29.59 per cent were unemployed at their principal occupation, on an average, 4.11 months during the census year, the average unemployment for persons engaged in manufactures, pure and simple, being 3.90 months; in short, that about one third of the total persons engaged in remunerative labor were unemployed at their principal occupation for about one third of the working time."

These results are then analyzed in many interesting ways. For instance, over 50 per cent of the persons unemployed were between

the ages of 20 and 39. Unemployment is more frequent in the cities than in the country; 53.51 per cent of the total number of unemployed persons being found in 23 cities. The principal classes of industries in which males are employed are manufactures,—65.94 per cent. Chief among these are boots and shoes (18.12 per cent of the whole); building (13.90 per cent of the whole); cotton goods (5.92 per cent); metal and metallic goods (6.14 per cent). Of the females 78.22 per cent of the unemployed were in manufactures. It was also noted that 4.45 per cent of the persons unemployed in their principal occupation had some work in other occupations.

The most interesting question in this connection is the cause of the lack of occupation during such a considerable period of the year. This can be answered only indirectly. It is obvious that in some occupations the workmen must lie idle part of the year, as in farming and fisheries. The greater number of the unemployed, however, being engaged in manufactures, it is natural to look to the statistics of manufactures for confirmation of these figures. It there appears that work was suspended in manufacturing establishments during the census year for an average of 2.94 months, of which 0.20 of a month was due to suspension for repairs, improvements, etc.; 2.72 months was caused by slack trade, and 0.02 months was due to strikes and lockouts. These figures confirm, to a certain extent at least, those gained directly from the individuals, as to their lack of work. The whole investigation is of great interest and value.

The *Michigan* report is devoted to farm mortgages and the nationality of farmers in Michigan. It appears that the investigation covered 90,803 farms, or about 58 per cent of the total number of farms. Of these, 43,079 were acknowledged to be mortgaged to the amount of \$37,456,272, or 46.8 per cent of their assessed valuation. The average rate of interest was 7.2 per cent, and the annual amount of interest was \$2,701,609. Extending these figures to the farms not investigated, there would be a mortgage indebtedness on farms alone of \$64,392,580, and an annual interest burden of \$4,636,265. The commissioner uses these statistics to demand some reform in the tax laws, by which the non-resident holder of mortgages may be made to pay a tax to the State of Michigan, a recommendation which seems to me impracticable and outside of the province of the impartial statistician. It appears from the other investigation that 63,379 of

the farmers are native born, and 31,570 foreign born, mostly Germans and Canadians.

The *Missouri* report includes the report of the inspector of mines, and a reprint of a report of a committee of the legislature on convict labor. The statistics of wages, hours of labor, amount of goods manufactured, etc., in the leading manufactures, are arrived at by "selecting for use a few of the most complete reports sent us of each character of business, taking neither the largest nor the smallest, but the intermediary concerns as a basis." On the basis of such figures the commissioner is "able to make the gratifying assertion that the showing of Missouri, as relates to wages, etc., is still better than that of most of the States, not taking into consideration that the cost of living here is the minimum for western States."

The *New Jersey* bureau has abandoned the wages statistics which it has carried on for so many years, and devotes the greater part of its tenth report to the history and statistics of trades-union and labor organizations of that State. The sketch is of considerable interest. A short chapter on co-operation and a compendium of labor legislation from the first part of 1888 are added.

The *North Carolina* report was the first one after the organization of the bureau, and necessarily tentative in its methods. Its information was gained entirely by correspondence, and whole of considerable interest, locally, is not of much value statistically. Among the subjects treated are wage returns from mechanics and farm laborers, reports from employers and landlords, cotton and tobacco industries, railroads, convict labor, and labor organizations.

The *New York* bureau presents a very bulky report on the subjects, strikes, boycotts, and conspiracy prosecutions and conspiracy laws. The bureau investigated 2212 labor troubles. The number of strikes or establishments affected by strikes was 1604, and the number of strikers was 51,731. Of these strikes 694 were said to have been successful, 190 were compromised, 696 were unsuccessful, and 24 still pending. 8176 strikers were refused work after the strike. The loss of wages incident to strikes was \$2,013,229.45. The amount expended by labor organizations in relief and conduct of strikes was \$217,069. Estimated gain to 11,422 persons in wages for one year was \$944,632. Loss to employers was \$1,102,576.70. It is needless to say that these figures are of very great value if they can be depended upon. Unfortunately, it is impossible to say, from the



report itself, whether any care was exercised in gathering them, or whether the statements of men and employers were taken indiscriminately. A very full account is given of each strike, embodying the answers of both working-men and employers, with copious extracts from newspapers and the proceedings of labor unions. The report, as a whole, leaves the impression of a great mass of information hastily flung together without much discrimination, and it would be well to use its conclusions with caution.

The *Ohio* report consists of a mass of statistics collected from the different counties of the State, in regard to wages and the number of hours of labor per day. No attempt is made to tabulate the returns, and they possess no statistical value. The financial resources of the Ohio bureau seem to be insufficient to accomplish anything.

The *Pennsylvania* bureau still employs the old method of sending out blanks by mail. But a very small proportion of these are ever returned, so that the commissioner himself declares the statistics to be entirely inadequate. By far the larger part of the report consists of descriptions of some of the leading iron works of the State.

The *Rhode Island* investigation shattered on the refusal of the manufacturers to answer the commissioner's questions.

The *Wisconsin* bureau prints a large number of answers by working-men to various questions concerning the effect of immigration, apprenticeship, labor organizations, acquisition of homes by laboring men, etc. It tabulates, also, a great mass of wage returns from employees and employers. Much of the information is interesting, although not put in such a form as to give a clear idea of the condition of the laboring classes in Wisconsin.

From this hasty review of the reports of the labor bureaus of the United States, it appears that very few of them are doing any strictly scientific statistical work. Their resources, their legal powers, and the skill of their chiefs are all insufficient for that. Very much of their work is purely perfunctory, and they are glad to fill up their reports with any material that comes to hand. On the other hand, they do collect a considerable amount of information that is of local interest, and it may be hoped that in the course of time they may educate the public to an appreciation of the important work such bureaus might if they were sufficiently supported and a proper interest taken in them.

RICHMOND MAYO SMITH.